



Habitat
for Humanity®

Beloved Community

Volunteer engagement

Strategies for Creating an Inclusive Volunteer Program

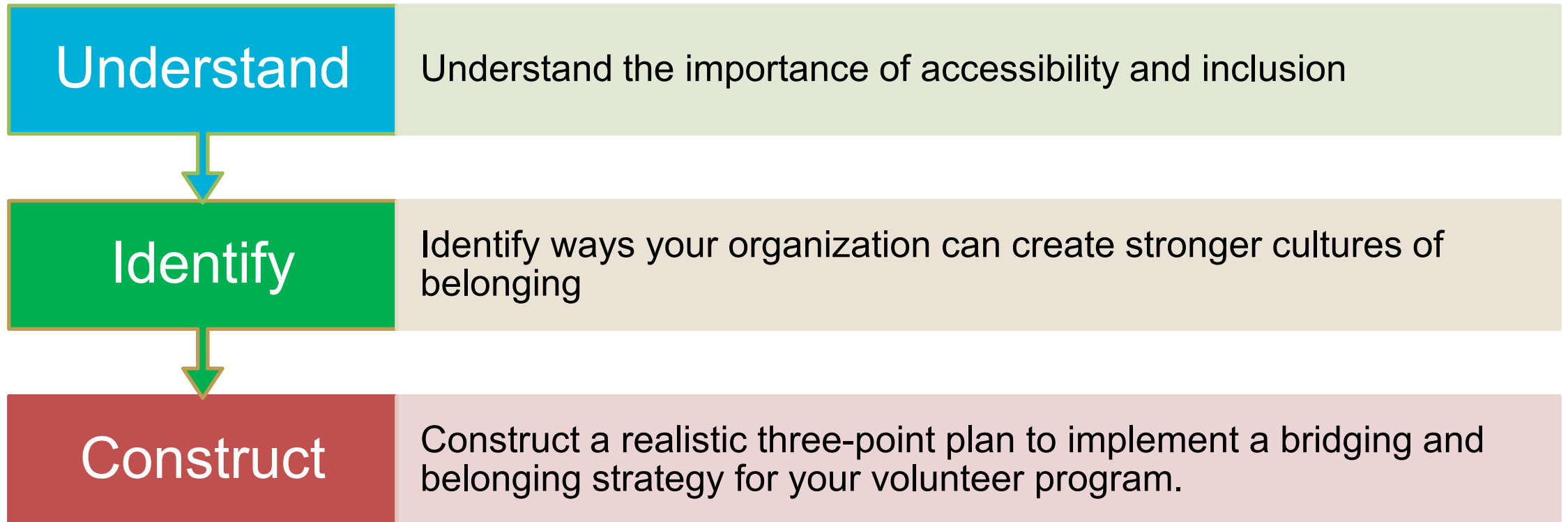


Habitat
for Humanity®

Dr. Hope Eady

Global Director of Learning & Development,
Housing Opportunities & Mission Engagement
(HOME) Team

Objectives



What is Inclusion?

- The measure of the quality of representation, such as full access, authentic representation, empowered participation, true belonging, and power-sharing. Inclusion is a qualitative measure of representation and participation.



Why Inclusion Matters




Heterogeneity promotes creativity and innovation.



Inclusive organizations are more likely to attract a variety of donors and increase the chances for additional resources.



The best organizations harness a variety of skills, perspectives, backgrounds, and resources to meet challenges.



**If we don't intentionally
include, we
unintentionally exclude.
The power of
innovation thrives in a
culture of inclusion.**

Identity Mapping

Exploring Who We Are to Understand Inclusion



Instructions

- Take 3–5 minutes to draw an identity map.
- Include parts of your identity that shape how you show up (e.g., race, gender, age, ability, religion, language, education, family roles, etc.).



Small Group Discussion

Prompts

- How might each identity impact someone's volunteer experience?
- Where might bias, exclusion, or barriers show up in our programs?

Intentional Inclusion

Although it can be complex to authentically create spaces that challenge historical norms, the answer to doing so lies in intentionality.

- Commitment to the mission and intentional engagement
- Orientations and guides that promote a sense of belonging
- Continued training and education around an evolving society
- The continued choice to be inclusive

Inclusive Spaces Are Brace Spaces



Brave spaces can look, sound, and feel different from one another, but the general idea is to cultivate a productive dialogue where participants are encouraged to speak honestly and critically from their own experiences.




We do not condone the creation of intellectual safe spaces where individuals can retreat from ideas and perspectives at odds with their own ideologies.



Language is the common thread for recruiting, retaining, and mobilizing a variety of volunteers that makes them feel like they belong.

The Power of Language



*“Understanding why and
how languages differ
tells about the range of
what is human.
Discovering what’s
universal about
languages can help us
understand the core of
our humanity.”*

*-- Dan Jurafsky,
Jackson Eli Reynolds Professor in
Humanities*

Inclusive Language In Practice



Call in to call up



Ask questions



Be comfortable with
the uncomfortable



Commit to
understanding

Shifting Words to Build Belonging Practices

Instructions

- In pairs or small groups, review common phrases used in volunteer recruitment, training, or communication.
- Identify language that may unintentionally exclude or stereotype.
- Rewrite the phrase using more inclusive, people-first language.



Inclusivity Leads To Cultures of Belonging

Creating belonging involves dialogue, mediation, and community-building to foster empathy, understanding, and shared solutions that move communities forward.



Break down harmful meta-perceptions and assumptions that fuel dehumanization and toxic polarization.



Develop trust among a variety of actors, which helps gain legitimacy and buy-in for common ground solutions.



Encourage active community engagement to work towards these solutions.

The Practice of Belonging

- **Advocacy:** Advocate for the equitable participation of volunteers and dismantle working stereotypes based on gender, race, sexuality, religion, disability, origin, or age. Speak out against policies that encourage specific work based solely on a discriminatory practice.
- **Application:** Using a child-centered approach to standing up for diverse groups. Ask yourself: Would I stand idle if I saw a child treated unjustly? What words and actions would I use to speak up in that situation?



Where is your organization in activating the five principles for creating an inclusive culture?

Questions for leaders to ask themselves:



Purposeful Leadership

Are your leaders visibly acting as change agents and role models in creating an inclusive culture



Personal Change

Is inclusion explicitly part of the expectations of what good leadership looks like in your organization?



Broad Engagement

Do you have a deep understanding of people's different experiences of inclusion and belonging?



Systemic Alignment

Have you sufficiently assessed your policies and processes to ensure that they are accelerating inclusion rather than getting in the way of progress?



Representation

Has visible progress been made in building a mix of representation at all levels and across all parts of the business?

Source: Heidrick & Struggles

A Call to Action

"Your voice is the bridge."

- Your actions build the culture. Let's commit to designing volunteer programs where everyone feels they truly belong—not just welcomed, but needed, valued, and empowered to lead.
- What's one shift you'll make today to build a braver, more inclusive space?"



Thank You!!



Hope Eady

Director, Global Learning & Development, HOME
heady@habitat.org

Let's Connect!



Josh Rodgers

Manager, Community and Mission Engagement
jrodgers@habitat.org

We build. We influence. **Together.**